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Lee A. Norman, M.D., Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

October 11, 2021

Dear Partner:

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is dedicated to promoting and supporting optimal health and development for children and families. With that goal in mind, we would like to inform you of **a new opportunity related to mitigating the impact of COVID-19.**

In addition to the mitigation strategies that you have already deployed in your facilities, such as cleaning, disinfecting, handwashing, and health screening, a new, free tool is available for your mitigation tool box: **self-administered COVID-19 testing.** Taking advantage of the opportunity could help you further protect and improve the health and safety of children in your care, staff working at your facility, and the community. We know how important it is to provide access to easy, reliable, and rapid testing to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and control outbreaks. Testing in group settings like child care will help identify individuals who have the virus but do not have symptoms and who may be contagious. Additionally, testing supports child care facilities with maintaining continuous operations and keeping children, staff, visitors, and volunteers safe.

KDHE is partnering with [Battelle](#), a leader in the field of science and technology. The organization has been selected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to manage the logistics of administering COVID-19 testing for 16 states in the Midwest. Operations are handled through the Midwest Expanded Testing Coordination Hub. Outreach and coordination for the Midwest Coordination Center is ramping up this month, and Battelle has an extensive team on board to help organizations like yours that serve children in group settings. Services and supports are in place to assist with implementing the testing process, registering individuals for testing, collecting samples, and receiving the results. **There is absolutely NO CHARGE** for any of these services, including testing supplies, shipping, and technical assistance. Saliva testing is now available for children as young as three years old, and nasal swab testing is available for children as young as 5 years old. Turnaround time is between 24-48 hours from sample collection.

If this seems like a good fit for your organization, and you are interested in learning more, please connect with the Battelle Midwest Coordination Center directly to discuss how your organization can begin COVID-19 testing. More information about the Midwest Coordination Center and the testing program is available at www.testedandprotected.org. The Battelle lead for Kansas is Maleah Slaughter. Maleah can be reached at 614-424-3381 or slaughterm@testedandprotected.org. A frequently asked questions (FAQ) document about this service is attached.

KDHE is grateful for your contributions and work you do every day for Kansas children, families, and communities. Your dedication, commitment, and compassion are noticed and truly valued.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachel Sisson".

Rachel Sisson, MS
Director, Bureau of Family Health

Attachment

Midwest Expanded COVID-19 Testing Coordination Center FAQs

October 11, 2021

Q. Who is Battelle?

A. [Battelle](#) is a leader in the field of science and technology selected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to manage the logistics of administering COVID-19 tests for 16 Midwest states through the Midwest Expanded Testing Coordination Hub.

Q. What is the Midwest Expanded Testing Coordination Center?

A. The Center is an HHS COVID-19 testing coordination center for group settings like child care and schools.

Q. Who is the Coordination Hub for?

A. Public and private K-12 schools, youth-serving organizations, shelters, nursing homes, child care centers, correctional facilities, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and other congregate settings.

Q. What type of testing does the Coordination Hub support?

A. The Hub supports many types of testing.

- Diagnostic testing for individuals who display symptoms of COVID-19.
- Screening testing for individuals who are not displaying symptoms of COVID-19.
- Surveillance testing (extended screening) of individuals or pooled samples that are taken on a recurring basis.

Q. Is there a cost involved with testing?

A. There is NO COST to the organization that is testing, including test kits, shipping, and technical assistance.

Q. Are the tests accurate?

A. All tests supported by the Coordination Center are FDA Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) tests. The tests of choice are the RT-PCR tests that are currently FDA-Approved for the detection of COVID-19.

Q. How do I collect test samples?

A. Sites will be directed to sample collection guidance provided by their partner lab. Saliva testing for children as young as three years has been approved.

Q. How do I return samples to the lab?

A. Labeled samples will be placed in provided specimen bags and packed in provided shipping containers/coolers. Multiple samples from a site can be packed in a single shipping container. Coordination Center liaisons will establish connections to network laboratories and samples will either be picked up by courier or shipped to the laboratory.

Q. How are tests results provided?

A. Test results will either be Detected, Not Detected, or Inconclusive. Not Detected (Negative) pooled test results and detected (Positive) individual results, will be reported back to the sample site's test result reader, the participant or guardian, HHS protect, and to the appropriate public health authorities.